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The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, *August* 24. 1695.

Queſt. 1. *When will the War with* France *be ended?*

Anſw. A hard choice here; if we don't anſwer this queſtion once more, we muſt be abus'd again (perhaps tho with matter of Truth) in the next Letter, and *Dunce* and we be call'd all the Blockheads in the Nation; If we do, 'tis a *dull repetition*, for to our certain knowledge this is the 2d or 3d time of anſwering, however, for peace-ſake have at it once more. And as to the *preſent-War*, we are of opinion 'twill be ended, as ſoon as *France* is *poor enough*, and perhaps, before 'tis *humble enough*: Tho when that will be, the end of this *Campaign*, it's probable, may help us to *gueſs nearer* than ever before.

Queſt. 2. *How ſhall I find the* Philoſopher's-ſtone?

Anſw. Here's another of the former, But we anſwer in ſhort: As the Chymiſts are ſaid to find a great many *ſecrets* while they are in *ſearch* of it, tho they never find the thing they ſeek for, ſo we can truſt you with one that's worth all their's, and without any expence, and that is, Leave off your fooliſh *Search*, and be *contented* without it.

Queſt. 3. *I'm an* old maid, *how ſhall I do to get a Husband?*

Anſw. Stay till a *Plague* comes, and then you may turn *Nurſe*, and get twenty in a year.

Queſt. 4. *Was there ever ſuch a parcel of Blockheads*, &c.

Anſw. Yes, for there are of all ſorts and ſizes among our *Querills*.

Queſt. 5. *I owe ten times more than I'm worth; How ſhall I get it paid?*

Anſw. Dye, or go to the *Wars*.

Queſt. 6. *Who are your Fathers?*

Anſw. Our *Mothers* know that beſt, and therefore 'twere your neareſt way to find 'em out and ask 'em.

To the Threeſcore, Nineteen thouſand, Ninehundred, and Ninety-Four, yet behind, we promis'd to anſwer 'em as ſoon as we are inform'd what they are, if they deſerve it, and we are able to do it. But tho Paper's dear, we muſt beg our angry queriſts pardon if we don't do't all in one *Mercury*.

Queſt. 7. *Was there ever any ſuch thing as* Sepulchral Lamps, *which will burn many hundreds of years without Conſuming?*

Anſw. We confeſs we had never yet the Good-Fortune to ſee any of 'em, nor we ſuppoſe is there any ſuch *Relick*, either in *Greſham College* or the *Oxford Laboratory* (yet burning we mean) tho it ſeems immodeſt to queſtion many relations that appear authentick enough, concerning things of this nature. Some writers tells us, that the ancients had a way of diſſolving Gold into an Oyly ſort of a Liquor, which they made uſe of in theſe Lamps, where it wou'd continue burning for many ages, which the reader is at liberty to believe or not, as he pleaſes, as well as that there was ſuch a Lamp found burning in a Tomb at *York*, on the Diſſolution of Abbys, ſuppoſed to be the Tomb of the Emperor *Conſtantius Chlorus*, which *Camden* mentions, upon the Information indeed of credible perſons, as he himſelf tells us, tho not of his own knowledge.

Queſt. 8. *What think you of the ſtory of the* Hawthorn *Tree* at Glaſtenbury, *which has been ſaid to bud every* Chriſtmas-Day?

Anſw. All that Mr. *Camden* ſays of it, is that if any one may be believ'd in matters of this nature, this has been affirm'd to him to be true by ſeveral Credible perſons. It was not in *Glaſtenbury* it ſelf, but in *Wirral-Park*, hard by it. However, this Superſtitious Tree, true or falſe, was cut down in the laſt Reforming Age, tho it ſeems they did not make ſuch Root and Branch-work with it, but that ſome ſtumps remain'd, at leaſt ſome Branches or Grafts out of it were ſav'd, and ſtill growing in the ſame Country, as we learn from the additions to that noble Author: Tho whether they have the ſame vertue with the former, or that had any more then any *other Hawthorn*, we don't pretend to determin, any more than the forementioned *Hiſtorian*.

Queſt. 9. *You having promiſed to make your account of Meteors more perfect, by adding that of the upper region, I doubt not but you will do it in time; yet the ſooner, the more obligeing, ſince there are ſeveral of us who expect ſome ſatisfaction from it.*

Anſw. The Meteors of the upper region, are ſuch as beginning to be inflamed in the middle region aſcend above it, and there ſhew themſelves; they are reckoned ſix, but there are but five real ones of them. Firſt, the Candle, which we have ſeen blazing like a Torch, about twentyfive Degrees above the *North Horizon*, in a Summers evening, and ſo continued in the ſame place for a minute or two, and then falling extinguiſhed like a flaming drop from a Torch, which goes out before it comes to the ground. The long blaze, which if it lye Horizontally it is called a beam, if perpendicular a Pillar, one of which we once ſaw, the lower end at length deſcended to the Earth, where it deſtroy'd ſome acres of ſtanding peaſe, the reaſon of which might be the meeting o two fiery matters paſſing ſeveral ways, as the wind that makes a whirle puff, and ſo the inflamed matter ſhews it ſelf, as the duſt does which is lifted up by the whirle-puff. The Dart, ſo called more from its motion than figure, ſuch we ſuppoſe was that ball of fire ſeen ſome years ago to paſs over *Hampton-ſhire*, *Bedford*, and *Hartford ſhire*, *Middleſex*, *Eſſex*, &c. Leaving a ſtream of light in the place whence it paſſed, which continued four or five Minutes after it was gone: The reaſon of it may be gueſſed by obſerving a Rocket which flyes from the end of its inflamation, it may be therefore conceived to be a Maſs of Combuſtible matter, mixt with other Glutinous not ſo Combuſtible, which may cauſe it to burn gradually, and fly from that ſide which was firſt kindled. The skipping Kid; this conſiſts of many fumes of unequal denſity which hovers in the Air, like the ſmoke of Tobacco, ſo as the more denſe being kindled ſhew themſelves like a flame, and the more rare only ſerve to convey the inflamation to another, with which it is continued, like the lighting of a Candle newly blown out, by its ſmoak only touching the flame of another Candle. Thus the flame as it were skips to and fro, like a friſking Kid, and from thence has its Name. Sparks, are when the matter is more denſe and diſcovered in ſmall parts each from other, as Charcoal Duſt that falls kindled from the breaking of a Rocket. To theſe ſome improperly add Comets, ſince they are neither fiery, nor Meteors.

Queſt. 10. *A Merchant of* London *being engaged to a vertuous Lady above two years ago, of no great Fortune, before the day of Marriage was prefixed, ſuſtained ſuch a great loſs by the* French *as diſabled him to pay his full debts; yet ſuch was her affection, as ſhe promiſed him to ſtay till he could ſettle his affairs with his Creditors, which accordingly is done, and the Creditors of their free offer gave him ſomething as a fond, to carry on ſome Trade for his Subſiſtance, which amounts to about as much as the Lady her ſelf has. But through the perſwaſion of ſome friends (tho ſhe is at her own diſpoſe) who repreſent to her, that what he has was extorted from his Creditors, and will not proſper; ſhe ſeems to decline, and would be diſingaged from her contract, under this pretence, that ſhe might be at Liberty to marry another that has made his Addreſſes to her in the mean time.*

Qu.

Qu. *Whether by the Laws of God and all good Men, she is not obliged in Honour and Conscience, Religiously to keep her contract with him, if he cannot resign up his interest in her; whose defect being in Success and Losses not in his power to avoid, and by no ill husbandry of his own.*

Answ. If the Lover tells his story right, we think instead of being free from him, his mistress is now more obliged to stand to the bargain; for, if she promised to have him whilst his affairs were dubious, she cou'd have no pretence to leave him, when they were settled after the best manner cou'd be expected.

Quest. 11. *About three years since being instigated by the the Devil, and my own unruly desires; I endeavoured to debauch and bring over to my will a certain young woman, but she resisting all my allurements and countermining my designs, I rashly wish'd I might perish, if ever I attempted to do the like again. Notwithstanding which Imprecation not three Months since (such was the frailty of my nature) I not only attempted but fully perpetrated that deadly sin; thereby justly meriting that dreadful sentence I had already past upon my self. Since the Commission of which Heinous Act I have had frequent Conflicts within my self, concerning the nature and pardonableness of the same; and upon deliberate consideration of the Crime, and Serious reflections on that direful wish, find my self in a very deplorable condition, both in respect to my present State in this, and my future State in the world to come, wherefore I heartily beseech you to consider the case, and to give me such counsel and directions as may enable me to make my peace with that God, whom I have so Egregiously offended, and may divert the Judgment, which by my rash and wicked Imprecation I have most justly deserved.*

Answ Crimes committed after such imprecations are almost of the highest nature, since it is in some respect a questioning the power and omniscience of God Almighty, for no man if he was absolutely perswaded of these attributes in God wou'd dare so imprudently to tempt his Justice; yet tho such offences are very heinous our merciful Creator has promised us pardon upon condition of sincere repentance, and this implies an absolute forsaking of, as well as sorrow for sin, which if we dilligently observe we shall certainly be accepted, therefore we ought not to doubt the Goodness and Mercy of God, but only carefully to watch our selves, that we don't fall again by the like temptations. To which also, where any injury is done to another, as well in this as in other Cases, some recompence must be made, as likewise endeavours to convince and if possible reform that person, whom we have been any ways the occasion of seducing. And tho our sins were never so great, and many in number, yet if we repent and amend, we shall be freed from their dominion here, and unhappy consequences hereafter, on the account of our blessed Saviours merits and sufferings.

Quest. 12. *Coming accidentally into a friends house on a* Sunday, *I found him reading the sixth* Satyr *in* Juvenal English'd, *which to me seemed but an odd sort of a Book to be read on so holy a day. I admired something at his prophaneness (as I indeed thought it) which he seemed to excuse: And said he thought there was not any prophaneness in the matter, further adding that there was good to be learnt out of what he read: now we rely on your Judgments to satisfy us both in the truth; and to tell us, whether it be Lawful to read the abovemention'd book on the Sabbath Day, and if so where lies the good which my friend flatters himself, he can infer from it.*

Answ, We believe nothing fit or proper at that time to be read but Divinity, tho were not other treatises unlawful in themselves, they wou'd become so by being matter of offence; And supposing there be much benefit to be had from such books, we very much doubt the good design of those who choose that day to gain it in.

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All five Printed for *John Dunton* in *Jewen-street*, and may also be had of *Edm. Richardson* near the *Poultrey-Church*.

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